

Birth Outcomes

Preterm and low birthweight

According to new mothers responding to the PRAMS survey, approximately 11 percent of Latina mothers gave birth to premature babies previously compared with 12 percent of non-Latina white mothers and 15 percent of non-Latina African-American mothers. The rate of low birth weight babies among Latinas was 5 percent while this rate was 11 percent among non-Latina African Americans.

Postpartum Behaviors

Return to work

Figure 5 shows Latina women were less likely to report that they returned to work or school within two months of giving birth compared to other race/ethnicity groups. Only 30 percent of Latina mothers reported that they returned to work or school compared to 67 percent of non-Latina African-American, 55 percent of other non-Latina, and 51 percent of non-Latina white mothers. Among mothers who returned to work or school shortly after delivery, on average, Latina mothers returned when their baby was about 10.5 weeks old, compared to 9.5 weeks for mothers of other race/ethnicity groups.

Breastfeeding initiation

Latina mothers were more likely to report that they initiated breastfeeding compared to other race/ethnicity groups.

Eighty-seven percent of Latinas reported that they initiated breastfeeding compared to 75 percent of non-Latina white women, 70 percent of other non-Latina women, and only 58 percent of non-Latina African-American women.

Postpartum contraception

Similar to other race/ethnicity groups, the majority of Latina women reported using postpartum contraception (88%). The two contraceptive methods that Latinas were most likely to report using were the condom (31%) and pill (27%). Other contraceptive methods Latina women reported included having shots every three months/Depo-Provera (18%), having IUD inserted (10%) and having their tubes tied (7%).

Knowledge of North Carolina Programs

The PRAMS survey asks new mothers to report whether they have heard of a number of North Carolina programs about women's health, prenatal care, or children's health. An overwhelming percentage of North Carolina Latinas and non-Latinas knew about the WIC program (93%). Sixty percent of Latinas and 54 percent of non-Latinas had heard of Health Check or Health Choice for Children. Latina women were less likely than other race/ethnicity groups to report knowledge of the Smart Start program (20% vs. 60%) and the Baby Love program (24% vs. 38%). Less than 20 percent of all race/ethnicity groups had heard of the Child Resource Line, the NC Family Health Resource Line, Child Service Coordination (CSC), Children's Specialized Services Help Line, or the First Step Hotline.

